**Comment opposing the proposed conservation of *Physcus* Howard, 1895 (Insecta, Hymenoptera) by the suppression of *Coccobius* Ratzeburg, 1852**
(Case 2629; see BZN **45**: 288–291)

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1. We are strongly opposed to the proposed suppression of the chalcidoid generic name *Coccobius* Ratzeburg, 1852, in favour of *Physcus* Howard, 1895, as requested by Rosen, Rivnay & Viggiani. The proposed conservation of *Physcus* cannot be justified on a nomenclatural or systematic basis, and would do more to disrupt stability than to promote it.

2. According to Rosen et al. there are three main objections to the use of *Coccobius*: (1) the type species of *Coccobius, C. annulicornis* Ratzeburg, 1852, is currently unrecognisable, and as such *Coccobius* cannot be accepted as synonymous with *Physcus*; (2) even if *Coccobius* and *Physcus* can be shown to be synonymous, use of the name *Coccobius* rather than *Physcus* would disrupt stability; (3) the name *Physcus* is well known in the literature of biological control and economic entomology. We disagree with the authors concerning their first two points, and as to their third point, we feel that overall stability would be more disrupted by conserving the name *Physcus* (which instead can remain as an available name, but a junior synonym of *Coccobius*).

3. For their first point, Rosen et al. consider the recognition of the genus *Coccobius* as doubtful, as type material for the type species *C. annulicornis* was destroyed in the Second World War. However, as in many cases where original type material is no longer extant, a reasonable assumption can be made as to the identity of this species. As early as 1895 Howard (p. 10) suggested that *C. annulicornis* might belong to his new genus *Physcus*. From Ratzeburg's original description (1852, p. 195) the identity of *annulicornis*, with distinctive black and white antennae, yellow-brown thorax, and brown abdomen, is clear: only one European aphelinid fits this description.

4. Novitzky had examined the *annulicornis* type (Graham, 1976, p. 144; Hayat, 1983, p. 79; see also BZN **45**: 289, paras 8 and 9), and there is presently a specimen in the British Museum (Natural History) from Novitzky's collection, which he determined as *C. annulicornis* through comparison with Ratzeburg's type (Novitzky, personal communication to Z. Bouček). Hayat (1983, p. 79) mentions this specimen as being '. . . on a card with the antennae missing and the head partially eaten by psocids.' In reference to this specimen, which they apparently have not examined, Rosen et al. claim (their para. 10) that '. . . to the best of our knowledge an aphelinid specimen mounted on a card, without antennae and with part of the head eaten, cannot be identified to genus — let alone to species — with any degree of certainty'. This argument is in seeming contradiction to a previous statement in their proposal (para. 3, which is a quote from Hayat, 1984) that the genus *Physcus* 'is rather distinctive and is not likely to be confused with any other aphelinid genus'.

5. We have examined Novitzky's *annulicornis* specimen and it is clearly congeneric with *Physcus* (and identical to *Physcus testaceus* Masi, 1910 (pp. 36–37), syn.n.). Fortunately, one of the antennae of this specimen is present; it had been removed from the head, and glued separately on the card. The distinctive form of both the antenna and thorax in this specimen are in complete agreement with the generic concept of *Physcus*.

It is highly unlikely that Novitzky could have confused this easily recognisable species, and we have no doubt that his specimen represents the species described by Ratzeburg.

6. In order to avoid any further confusion or argument concerning the recognition of the genus *Coccobius*, we now designate this *annulicornis* specimen from Novitzky's collection as neotype of the species *Coccobius annulicornis* Ratzeburg, 1852. Although this specimen is slightly damaged, it is easily recognisable, and it is the only specimen that we are aware of, or that has been referred to in the literature, that has been compared with the original type material. Data for this specimen in the British Museum (Natural History) are as follows: [Hungary], 'Vácz, Tudósdomb, Biró, 1930.v.31', 'Csöröghegy retis ope'. It also bears the label 'Det. S. Novickij, ♀ *Coccobius annulicornis* Ratz'. There can be no further confusion regarding the identity of the genus *Coccobius*.

7. As to the second point of Rosen et al., we contend that suppression of the name *Coccobius* would disrupt stability rather than promote it. Hayat's (1983) work in which he re-established the name *Coccobius* is the first modern generic treatment of the APHELINIDAE, and as such will be the foundation of further research for years to come. In this work Hayat (p. 81) addressed the matter of whether to use *Coccobius* or *Physcus* and concluded '. . . I think that we should not reject a name just because some authors ignored, or misunderstood, or have preferred to use a later name without investigating the availability of an earlier published synonym. In this case, the possibility of *annulicornis* being a *Physcus* was suggested as early as 1895 by Howard, the author of *Physcus*'.

8. Rosen et al. never make it clear from a systematic point of view for what reason they feel the use of the name *Coccobius* would disrupt stability, but it clearly does not fall into the category of an unused senior synonym as outlined by Article 79c of the Code. The identity of *Coccobius* has been established, and the name has been used in systematic and biological control literature (Hayat, 1984, 1985, 1986; Waterhouse & Norris, 1987; Woolley, 1988).

9. The final argument Rosen et al. make is that the generic name *Physcus* is well known in the literature of biological control and economic entomology. We are not convinced as to the validity of this argument. Nobody, including systematists, likes to learn new names for taxa they have known under another name. However, knowledgeable biological control workers and economic entomologists will appreciate that advances which provide systematic stability in important groups of poorly understood insects (such as the APHELINIDAE) are of far greater long term benefit to them than the maintenance of previously used names for sentimental reasons.

10. As the name *Coccobius* is shown to have both its usage and its identity established, and as Rosen et al. have not provided sufficient evidence to support their proposal to suppress the generic name *Coccobius* in favour of *Physcus*, we request the ICZN to reject their appeal. We rather request the Commission:

(1) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Coccobius* Ratzeburg, 1852, (gender: masculine), type species *Coccobius annulicornis* Ratzeburg, 1852 by designation by Gahan & Fagan (1923, p. 37);

(2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *annulicornis* Ratzeburg, 1852, as published in the binomen *Coccobius annulicornis* and as defined by the neotype designated in para. 6 above (specific name of the type species of *Coccobius* Ratzeburg, 1852).

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## Comment on the proposed conservation of ICHTHYOPHIIDAE Taylor, 1968 (Amphibia, Gymnophiona)

(Case 2616; see BZN **45**: 207–209)

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Although the family name ICHTHYOPHYIIDAE Taylor, 1968 is only 21 years old the circumstances warrant its conservation.

The taxonomy of the Gymnophiona (caecilians), on a world-wide basis, remained until 1968 essentially neglected and in a very elementary state, with but one family recognised. Taylor's monograph of 1968 was the turning point in study of this group, with recognition of three families, including the ICHTHYOPHIIDAE; now five families are accepted. The monograph is the baseline for all modern work on the order, and it has stimulated an enormous literature in the succeeding span of little more than 20 years. It is essentially the *Systema Naturae* of gymnophione taxonomy *and* biology. That it supplant pre-1968 work is not suggested, but due recognition should be given to it as the starting point for modern work, particularly in view of the magnitude of subsequent literature. In the interests of nomenclatural stability it is important that the application for conservation of the family name ICHTHYOPHIIDAE Taylor, 1968 be approved.